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New Ground - News of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest - Spring 2011

## Mount St. Helens Returns to Life in a Whole New Way

The Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument has many new features for visitors to explore and experience this year. One of these is an interactive “Return to Life” touchscreen exhibit. Six of these touchscreen exhibits each explain how life is returning to areas of Mount St. Helens devastated by the May 18, 1980 volcanic eruption.

These exhibits will help visitors quickly and intuitively grasp forest life around Mount St. Helens before and after the eruption. They focus on the six different disturbance zones and how affected ecosystems have changed during the last 31 years.

The story of how plants and animals have returned to the area after the blast is narrated by participating scientists, and is illustrated with dramatic archival photography and footage detailing 30 years of change. The exhibit allows visitors to select stories by individual disturbance zones as displayed on a 3-D map of the volcano and surrounding terrain. Layered on the 3-D map is a timeline of three decades of vegetation growth, showing visitors how quickly plants have returned to Mount St. Helens.

The “Return to Life” exhibits are presented by the U.S. Forest Service in partnership with the Mount St. Helens Institute, and produced by Second Story Interactive Studios. They are now available at Johnston Ridge Observatory. And, later this summer at Monument Headquarters, Pine Creek and Cascade Peaks Information Stations.

Also this summer, Johnston Ridge Observatory will open a new outdoor amphitheater and newly remodeled HD movie theater that will feature the new film “Eruption of Life.” In addition, new audio translation handsets will translate movies and exhibits into six languages. Mount St. Helens Institute will provide new summer guided hikes, climbs and field seminars.

Further information can be found by checking out the Gifford Pinchot National Forest’s new at webpage [fs.usda.gov/giffordpinchot](http://fs.usda.gov/giffordpinchot) or the Mount St. Helens’ new webpage at [fs.usda.gov/mountsthelens](http://fs.usda.gov/mountsthelens).



## Fish News from Mount St. Helens

*by District Fisheries Biologist, Adam Haspiel*

### ***Reintroduction of Anadromous Fish into the Upper North Fork Lewis River Basin***

In 1931 Merwin Dam was constructed on the Lewis River to provide hydropower for Northwest homes. Yale and Swift Dams were built in 1953 and 1958. Fish passage into the upper Lewis River was blocked, eliminating over 170 miles of anadromous (ocean going) fish habitat, much of it on the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument/Ranger District.

The owner, PacifiCorp, is preparing to reintroduce anadromous fish above these dams in 2012 as a result of going through a lengthy relicensing process. Anadromous fish to be reintroduced above the dams include steelhead trout, chinook and coho salmon. All three fish are on the Federal Threatened and Endangered Species list. The majority of streams to become accessible to salmon and steelhead are located on the Mount St. Helens Ranger District. Forest Service District fish biologists and technicians are implementing fish habitat restoration projects and are ensuring streams ready when fish are reintroduced.

PacifiCorp is also preparing for reintroduction by retrofitting and upgrading an existing fish-trap at the base of Merwin Dam. It will collect adult fish that will then be transported above Swift Reservoir to continue their upstream migration. Juveniles working their way downstream will be caught by a floating surface collector installed in the reservoir above Swift Dam. This floating surface collector will operate 24 hours a day/7 days a week.

The Forest Service and PacifiCorp have partnered in constructing three acclimation ponds. These will adapt juvenile spring chinook to specific water sources in the Upper Lewis River Basin above the dams. This will aid in distributing fish throughout the basin. Acclimation ponds will be located on Clear Creek and Muddy River, as well as the Upper Lewis River near Crab Creek.

When salmon and steelhead are once again able to access streams above the dams, they will find several areas with improved spawning and rearing habitat. Fish Habitat Restoration projects funded to date by a variety of partners include projects on the Muddy River, Clear Creek, Pine Creek and Lewis River. Projects include decommissioning of unmaintained roads, replacing culverts with bridges, removal of illegal campsites impacting the river system, removal of noxious weeds growing in riparian areas, riparian thinning of trees to encourage faster growth providing

future large wood and shade and bank stability/erosion control. Only through partnerships are these types of projects made possible. For example, removal of “Sheep Bridge” an old bridge whose creosote timbers that had fallen into the Lewis River leaching creosote until it was removed by using a helicopter for proper disposal.

### ***East Fork Lewis River***

In addition to the work on the North Fork Lewis River, Mount St. Helens fisheries specialists have been busy working on projects on



Pine Creek is a major spawning tributary to the Upper Lewis River and receives a lot of attention from biologists laboring to restore bull trout runs.

the East Fork Lewis River system. Much of the large instream wood fish need to flourish was lost as a result of the Yacolt fires and subsequent logging and stream cleanout projects. Without natural logjams, gravel is just washed downriver and pool habitat is lost.

Projects were developed to help threatened steelhead recover, and include instream fish habitat work on sections of the East Fork Lewis River. To date, over 660 trees have been placed using helicopters to create channel-spanning log jams. These log jams capture gravel to create spawning beds for adult fish. In addition, the log jams create pools to provide winter cover and summer rearing conditions needed by juvenile steelhead before they head to the ocean.

Another 300 trees will be placed this year to create more log jams,

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# Mount St. Helens Youth Stream Team Wins More Kids in the Woods Funding

Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument received a grant of \$27,500 for the Youth Stream Team to perform critical, on-the-ground monitoring and restoration work. This is “More Kids in the Woods” funding helping Stream Team partners to engage underserved youth, ages 8 to 18, in work along two rivers on the south side of Mount St. Helens.

Forest Service fisheries biologists are working on projects to restore habitat on the Upper Lewis and Muddy river systems to ensure the success of anadromous (ocean-going) fish reintroduction. Youth Stream Team participants assist with these projects one day a week for the whole summer since 2009. The goal is to teach these young people the importance of sustainable resource management while they provide valuable data and make a visible difference on their public lands.

Project partner Mount St. Helens Institute’s Director of Science Education Laura Kerr said, “We are very excited about our two years of proven success, but this grant will allow us to expand capacity of the Youth Stream Team to bring more kids into the woods.” She said this money will make possible additional transportation to and from restoration work sites.

Kerr continued, “All partners are instrumental in the success of bringing these young people to learn about fisheries enhancement projects.” Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument and the Mount St. Helens Institute have joined the Vancouver Police Activities League (VPAL) together with other volunteers in this endeavor.

Gifford Pinchot National Forest Supervisor Janine Clayton said she thinks it is great to have young people so engaged in the natural processes occurring in their own back yard. “We appreciate their contribution to the greatest good,” she said. “We would really like to encourage others to take these young people’s lead in helping to maintain our common natural heritage.”

## Educational Programs at Ape Cave This Spring



Interpretive Rangers educate and entertain at Ape Cave and all over the Monument.

All visitors to Ape Cave should be aware of on-going work on the parking area, as well as other construction activities slated for this spring.

The Gifford Pinchot National Forest is excited to expand educational offerings at Ape Cave this year. Beginning on May 16, 2011, an environmental educator is available to help a limited number of schools groups visiting Ape Cave and Trail of Two Forests.

Ranger Cory Wall said, “This is a pilot program for us, an experiment to explore the interest and need for a unique educational experience.” Teachers who would like to learn more about these services should contact Cory Wall at [cwall02@fs.fed.us](mailto:cwall02@fs.fed.us) or 360-449-7838.

Teachers and students planning on visiting Ape Cave, whether requesting Ranger assistance or not, are asked to register on the Teacher’s Corner page located on the Mount St. Helens website at [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/teacherscorner](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/teacherscorner). Here Teachers will find lesson plans for activities at different sites on the south side of Mount St. Helens.

“We have heard from teachers in the past that an educational program would be of value to them and their students,” said Wall. “We believe that a focused outdoor opportunity will provide a positive experience for the kids, and that will lead them to encourage their families to visit during the summer.”



Stream Team students conduct a survey on a Mount St. Helens river. Photo by Laura Kerr

## Fish News (continued from pg. 1)

building on the success of previous years’ work. Funding for these projects will come from the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board—a State-funded partner instrumental in recovery of salmon and steelhead in Western Washington—and from Ecotrust.



This is a log jam on the East Fork Lewis River created by MSH fisheries.

Other projects in the East Fork Lewis River Basin include replacement of failing culverts with a bridge on a tributary to the Green Fork that will open up over a mile of steelhead habitat, closure of dispersed campsites and roads that were negatively impacting the East Fork Lewis River and replacement of migration barrier culverts with fish passage culverts.

### Other MSH Fish News

**Youth Stream Team:** All of these projects and their funding sources have a monitoring component that allows partners to bring urban kids to learn and help. This is the third year in which the Mount St. Helens Institute Youth Stream Team has participated. They provide usable data while gaining experience and exploring possible career opportunities. Mount St. Helens fisheries personnel say they see youth opening their horizons and realizing there is a lot more to life than just what happens in the city.

**Kids Fishing Derby:** A popular kids fishing derby is held at Merwin Park each year in June. More than 250 kids participate annually. Over 20 partners are involved in this fun-filled event that gives kids an opportunity to fish and participate in various outdoor events. These include face-painting, build-a-volcano, fish printing, aqua-aquarium and story telling in a 40 foot salmon tent.

**Salmon Carcasses for Nutrients:** Each year coho salmon carcasses are distributed in Pine Creek and the East Fork Lewis River to restore nutrients that feed aquatic macroinvertebrates. These are the critters eaten by juvenile steelhead, salmon and bull trout as they grow and prepare for their journey to the main river, ocean or lakes. In the past,

helicopters were used in Pine Creek to help distribute these carcasses, but now they are pitched by hand in select locations with vehicle access.

**Riparian Tree Planting:** This year over 500 seedlings will be planted in riparian areas in the Muddy River and Clear Creek to restore the conifer component to the stream ecosystem. When these trees mature, they will provide shade to the stream and a long-term source of large woody material so valuable to anadromous runs.

The Mount St. Helens Fisheries staff wants people to know that without the help of all departments, these projects would not be nearly as successful or as fun as they have been.

**Notable Partners Helping the Monument/District Fish Program:** Mount St. Helens Institute, PacifiCorp, Fish First, Clark Skamania Flyfishers, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Trout Unlimited, Camas Moose Lodge, City of Vancouver, NAACP, Cowlitz Fire District #1, Swift Community Action Team, Equipment Rental Services, Lelooska Foundation, Broken “T” Guide Service and many more.

## MSH Fisheries Program Personnel

### Adam Haspiel

is the District Fish Biologist on the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument/ Ranger District and has been working there since July 2005. Prior to then, he worked with the Department of Defense and

was the Watershed Manager at Fort Carson, CO. He also worked on the Siskiyou National Forest, and Six Rivers National Forest. He is married to Kellie O’Neill, a landscape architect. They met while working on the Siskiyou National Forest and have one son, Kaleb Haspiel. Kaleb is 16 years old and is attending CAM in Battle Ground. Haspiel’s hobbies include wood working, a bit of fishing and traveling.

**Bryce Michaelis** is the District/Zone Aquatic Technician and has worked on Monument/District since 2002. He has also worked for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Bryce grew up in Battle Ground and married his High School Sweetheart, Angie. He enjoys golfing, fishing and boating on Merwin Reservoir.



Adam Haspiel, prepares to “fling” a coho carcass to replace lost nutrients.